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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/552,124	10/05/2005	Jean-Yves Lehman	Serie 5340	4100
7590 Linda K Russell Air Liquide Intellectual Property Department Suite 1800 2700 Post Oak Blvd Houston, TX 77056			EXAMINER DOERRLER, WILLIAM CHARLES	
			ART UNIT 3744	PAPER NUMBER
			MAIL DATE 11/27/2007	DELIVERY MODE PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/552,124	LEHMAN ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	William C. Doerrler	3744	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 11-23 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) 23 is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 11, 12, 15-18, 21 and 22 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) 13, 14, 19 and 20 is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on 05 October 2005 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____ .
3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application
Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>10-5-2005</u> .	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____ .

DETAILED ACTION

Priority

Receipt is acknowledged of papers submitted under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d), which papers have been placed of record in the file.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

Claims 11,12,15-18,21 and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Habicht et al (6,351,968) in view of Allam et al (6,360,561). Habicht et al discloses applicant's basic inventive concept, a two column air separation system (high pressure column 1 and low pressure column 2) with a reboiler (3)in the lower pressure column for reboiling liquid oxygen in the bottom of the lower pressure

column, and an auxiliary reboiler 6 which is fed from the sump at the bottom of the low pressure column and reboils the liquid at a higher temperature (see the bottom of column 2 and the top of column 3 for the higher temperature details) to return oxygen vapor to the low pressure column through line 8 and purges remaining liquids through line 7, substantially as claimed with the exception of using a less flammable material for the higher temperature auxiliary reboiler. Allam et al states that copper and stainless steel are less flammable, yet expensive compared to aluminum (which is stated to be common in cryogenic heat exchangers in the previous paragraph) in the paragraph beginning in line 4 of column 2, and continuing in the following paragraph. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicants' invention from the teaching of Allam et al to use a less flammable material such as copper or stainless steel for the smaller, higher temperature heat exchanger to reduce the risk of the oxygen igniting, while maintaining a common aluminum heat exchanger in the sump to reduce costs. In regard to claims 12 and 16, note that line 42 of column 2 of Habicht et al state that between .02 and .5% of the oxygen is removed from the low pressure column. Line 8 of column 3 states that up to 10% of the oxygen can be removed to the auxiliary reboiler.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 13,14,19 and 20 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 23 is allowed.

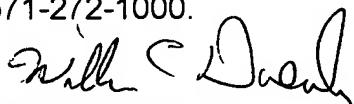
Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Cheung shows a distillation column with an auxiliary reboiler for liquid oxygen.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to William C. Doerrler whose telephone number is (571) 272-4807. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 6:30-4:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Cheryl Tyler can be reached on (571) 272-4834. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.


William C Doerrler
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3744

WCD